Phil Franks

Cheops' pyramid . . . an exact interception of the summer sunrise & the central sun of the galaxy . . . lay lines . . .

An Endless Party At Glastonbury

BY CHRIS HODENFIELD

GLASTONBURY — About ten miles south of a town called Downhead, Andrew Kerr decided to put on a festival. He found the site in the hazy farmlands of Somerset, and as he looked in one direction, he saw an energy lay-line that ran from Stonehenge to Glastonbury Abbey. And as he looked up above him, he saw the alignment of the center of the Zodiac from Butleigh Church . . . it was an exact interception of the summer sunrise and the central sun of the galaxy . . .

I'll build my festival here, he thought. On the midsummer solstice. Spooks from way back in time know about these energy lay-lines. He scraped money from nowhere and built a festival.

Instead of a stage, he constructed a pyramid, exactly one-tenth the size of Cheops', and put the stage in the middle. After a while, Andrew got around to doing a little dousing with a divining rod and zap, directly under the point of the pyramid, swirling *directly beneath,* he found a natural spring. An aquastatic spiral. And that was the first of a lot of good spooky things.

Imagine. An elderly cop was finishing his day on the beat, and he remarks to some people in the Release relief-aid tent, "Well, I'm off now, but I'm coming back tomorrow with the kids." The cops, in a land crawling with narcotics and LSD, racked up only two busts, one for stealing a tent.

The Glastonbury Fair leaves all other festivals in heavy disgrace. For one, it was designed intentionally to be free. No advertising was sent out and bands volunteered their services. The crowd of 10,000 (about one-40th the usual population of a festival) became its own little party.

Unlike other festivals, Glastonbury had no dramatic master of ceremonies. There was no central power figure to be roused. In fact, Andrew Kerr was living in a tent during the show, getting ripped with everyone else.

Commercialism was out, as were the purveyors of crass grub. Coca Cola trucks rolled up to do their usual good business, but were turned away at the gate by the cops. Hamburger vendors met the same fate, although it was found in mid-week that a hot dog stand did manage to muscle in. Immediately the macrobiotic mobs went over to admonish them and the Diggers, operating out of Sid's Free Kitchen, sent word out from the stage, "We've got tons of sausages, so tonight you can have *free hot dogs* [cheers], and in the morning for breakfast, *porridge!* [deafening roar]."

For three or four millenia now, people have come out to the Glastonbury region at midsummer's time to "make magicke and hatche treason." Neighboring Stonehenge has turned into a fenced-in tourist trap, closing down every day at 7 PM sharp. On Midsummer's Night a few imitation Druids are allowed in to perform the old shaman routine.

But there are 350 such ceremonial grounds within just a 20-mile radius of Stonehenge, and clearly, this is an area of much occult hanky-panky.

For instance: In 1928, a woman named K. E. Maltwood was standing on top of the Glastonbury Tor tower, when she got the idea there'd be signs of the zodiac spread out over the land. And sure enough, photographs taken from 30,000 feet reveal ten signs; a road shapes Aries' ram, the Tor is Aquarius' rising phoenix. John Michell, in attendance at the festival, brought to light much of the world's mystery signs in his book, *View Over Atlantis.* And the creepy mystical stuff was not lost on the crowds. By no means.

At night, film crews trained their huge spotlights along one side of the festival's pyramid so that a silhouette of the structure could be seen looming against the clouds. During the day, RAF pilots wheeled their jet fighters through victory rolls over the field, often barrelling straight for the very tip of the pyramid. Like they say, a few minds were blown . . .

As word of the amazing week-long festival spread around, people naturally wanted to get into the act. Traffic was the "headline," as Pink Floyd got lost in a European equipment screw. Hopes were raised that Grateful Dead would come, although they too got their screw on the Continent. Towards the end, an average of six bands a day were volunteering their services.

An ecstatic religious group of Indian extraction decided that this was the place to spring on the world their 13-year-old swami, Santji Maharaj. Up onto the stage they trooped, interrupting an excellent set by Brinsley Schwarz. A zealously devout girl pressed it to them, "You've got to make this a short, short set and make this a real beautiful moment." Disgusted, Brinsley and boys tramped off.

The budding little Buddha, flanked by his holier-than-thou heavies, was wrapped in muslin and a pair of immaculately white Lonsdale gym sox. He tapped the mike like a pro and then gushed his own praise for ten minutes, took a bored look at his ritzy wrist watch, and signalled for a retreat.

Most bands played songs loosely based around long improvisational jams. David Allen, once Soft Machine's guitarist, brought his French band, Gong, and whanged out an amazing free-wheeling set. Terry Reid brought out his new band and did an even better one. Traffic's set was marred when a column of speakers fell of top of Dave Mason's two Martin D-45s.

Strong men were reduced to tears (well, almost) during David Bowie's sunrise service, the heart-tugger being "Memories of a Free Festival." Accrington Stanley, rumored to be the first band due to be signed up to Stones' label, surpassed the low expectations that were also rumored of them and turned in a gorgeously tight set. And Melanie, although well-liked around these parts, was the one to bring up the sun on midsummer's morning. A strange choice.

Even stranger was the appearance of Arthur Brown's new band, Kingdom Come. Around mid-week, the locals began to complain about the noise, threats being made to start injunctions if the music didn't stop by midnight. Come Wednesday at 12 AM, the stage was given to Brown, who entered in typical grandiose style (three burning crosses in front of the stage, the middle crucifix exploding), and proceeded to bum everybody out. He possibly succeeded in mind-trashing the entire county. His "Wastes of the Galaxy" routine was such nasty kicks that a booster section on the sound tower began the Fugs/Broughton chant, "Out demons out."

The air was thick with acid. At times, when even the announcers on stage were ripped out of their skulls and jabbering like jabberwocks, the entire joint was connected in one rubber-flow of guitar-lines, energy lay-lines, power lines, telephone lines. And a few times idiot dancers were in their revel, attempting to command all attention from the front of the stage.

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Now, after half-a-decade of progressively more insane festivals, Andrew Kerr's Glastonbury has proved that it can be done right. Of course, the £7000 ($17,500) that he collected was a few thousand short to pay all the bills. And, surprise surprise, one of the donations he wants to make is to the police department, to cover their overtime pay, so that the locals don't get it taken from their taxes.

Already, as if sanity were just around the corner, Edgar Broughton is planning to do a run of free concerts from the back of a truck, parading all over England . . .

Andrew Kerr, age 37, who once researched Winston Churchill's biography for Sir Randolph, changed the cards. Of course, he spoiled it for anyone who ever had the slightest shred of a hope to make money on a festival again.

The celestial fires threaten not to leave the fields. Already, a couple have been married in the abbey; a woman gave birth to triplets under the midsummer's sun; and at festival's end, a hard-core of a hundred stayed to the land, and Kerr seems to think they'll be there for months; the party's never ending.

LONDON NOTES

B.B. King didn't quite get the Beatles but he did get Ringo Starr and Klaus Voorman for a recording session, aided by Peter Green. Steve Winwood, Gary Wright, Duster Bennett, Rick Wright, Ian Stewart (the old Stones' roadie), Humble Pie, Jellybread, plus Price, Keys, Keltner and Gordon. Alexis Korner brought along his 19-year-old son Nick, who played the rhythm guitar. Dave Mason came, but bowed out from playing. John Lennon promised, but had to break it. Eyes were on the lookout for Clapton, of course, but he never showed.

The London sessions were further in the three-album-line of presenting B.B. in new environments. Enough material has now been recorded to provide a further three albums, "none of it wishy-washy stuff," according to producer Ed Michel. (In addition, he recorded some tapes in California some time back with Taj Mahal, Jesse Davis, Joe Walsh and Randy California. A single, "Help the Poor," will be taken from those sessions). One enterprising first for the London sessions was B.B.'s playing an acoustic guitar, an old mellow 1938 Martin, upon which he banged out "Sugar Mama" and a few instrumental boogies.

The next album? "Well, I'm going South. It's going to be Memphis, but it's going to be even further South than that, if you can dig. I know there's all kinds of talent down there, people playing but never getting discovered. If I can set up some sessions down there, you know, way out in the country, and people can come along, then it'll be not only good for me and my session, but I can help them. I can't be more specific than that, because I just thought of it now."

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Aside from the occasional bash in some North England clubs, Joe Cocker has been quiet since Christmas. When it happended that he wanted to get in and record some more, everybody jumped in. Producer Denny Cordell booked up some time at Island studios, and on the first night Steve Winwood and Ringo Starr were sitting in the pits, waiting, with guitarists Joe Wright (from Jo Jammer) and Mick Wayne (from Junior's Eyes) aiding pianist Chris Stainton. Waiting. But Joe was not to be rushed. Not after six months. His voice, understandably, lacked a mite of the gurgle and roar. On the other hand, he has developed quite a proud beer belly. The first night in the studios turned into a five-hour jam and Starr and Winwood, a bit spooked, split.

As the week progressed, B.J. Wilson from Procol Harum came in to play drums and Stainton began playing everything in sight. In fact, Joe, who played drums as a teenager, sat down to the traps himself for a few tracks. All told, nine tracks were recorded, and then taken by Cordell out to Skyhill studios in California to be remixed, possibly for an October release date.

Chris Stainton is now getting Joe's new band together, and until that's done, Joe ain't talking. His new music is not as woozie-boozie as the old Mad Dogs stuff, and is closer to, say, a hard-edged Grease Band sound. Uh, yes (with a smile), he did see Leon at the Albert Hall. Uh, no (with a frown), he didn't catch the Mad Dogs film yet. Uh, we're just working on a few ideas here, it looks pretty good. . . .

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Disc, a local pop paper, polled its middle-of-the-road readership to find out how their tastes have changed in the past year. Over 60 percent said they had moved away from pop to something else; about 20 percent had changed from rock to acoustic. The clever seven percent claimed that their tastes had simply broadened. Over 60 percent bought more albums than a year ago and more than 70 percent bought fewer singles. Given a short list of groups to put in order of preference, 23 percent picked CSN&Y as the tops, with Led Zeppelin just behind. The Who were number three. Elvis could only manage sixth place, one jump ahead of Cliff Richard. Wheh.